

LETTER DATED 2 MARCH 1983 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TRANSMITTING TEXTS OF COMMUNICATIONS
CONTAINING THE REPLY OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO A RECENT SWEDISH INITIATIVE
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT IN EUROPE OF A ZONE FREE OF BATTLEFIELD
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of a letter by
Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman
of the Council of State of the GDR, addressed to Dr. Helmut Kohl, Federal
Chancellor of the FRG, on 4 February 1983 as well as of a note by the
GDR-Government to the Swedish Government. Both texts refer to the recent
Swedish initiative on the establishment in Europe of a zone free of
battlefield nuclear weapons.

I request that they be distributed as an Official Document of the
Committee on Disarmament.

(Signed) Dr. Gerhard Herder
Ambassador

REPLY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
TO A RECENT SWEDISH INITIATIVE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT IN
EUROPE OF A ZONE FREE OF BATTLEFIELD NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1. Reply by the Government of the GDR:

The Government of the German Democratic Republic presents its compliments to the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden and expresses its thanks for the note of 8 December 1982 containing ideas on the establishment in Europe of a zone free of battlefield nuclear weapons.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic shares the concern of the Swedish Government over the high concentration of nuclear weapons on this continent. It concurs with its view that every possible effort must be made to reduce and, indeed, completely eliminate nuclear weapons in Europe. The Swedish proposal affords an opportunity to move closer to this goal and to scale down military confrontation in Europe substantially. At the same time, it conforms to the belief of the German Democratic Republic and the other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of Europe may lessen the danger of nuclear war and give fresh impetus to détente and mutually beneficial co-operation.

The German Democratic Republic attaches special importance to creating such a zone on both sides of the dividing line between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization because in its immediate proximity is to be found the State with the densest concentration of nuclear weapons and because plans exist to deploy further nuclear weapons.

However, if one takes into account the principal military parameters (range, speed, etc.) of the nuclear weapons already existing, the proposed nuclear-weapon-free zones of 150 kilometres on each side of this line would appear to be not wide enough. A wider zone would be required in order to obtain a real increase in security for the participating States and for Europe as a whole. As far as the German Democratic Republic is concerned, it is prepared to make available its entire territory for such a zone provided the principle of equality and equal security is observed.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is interested in continuing to discuss with representatives of the Swedish Government all questions connected with the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. It would welcome it if the Swedish Government provided information on the reactions of other European Governments and elaborated the ideas put forward to date.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden the assurances of its highest considerations.

27 January 1983

2. Letter addressed by the GDR-State Council Chairman to the Federal Chancellor of the FRG on 4 February 1983:

Berlin, 4 February 1983

Dear Mr. Chancellor,

Permit me to inform you that the Swedish Government has requested the Government of the German Democratic Republic to set forth its views on the proposal to create a "zone free of battlefield nuclear weapons extending from Central Europe to the outermost northern and southern flanks of the two alliances". The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic, having closely studied this Swedish proposal, have arrived at the conviction that the creation of such a zone could be a useful move to strengthen peace in Europe and to advance détente.

Accordingly, it was resolved to support the Swedish initiative. Meanwhile, the Swedish Government has been officially informed that the German Democratic Republic, going beyond the Swedish proposal, is ready to make available its entire territory for such a zone if the principle of equality and equal security is observed.

Considering the importance of the Swedish initiative as well as the responsibility of both German States for peace and the concomitant obligation to assist actively in preventing a nuclear catastrophe, it would be of great significance if the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, too, supported this initiative.

I should be very much obliged to you, Mr. Chancellor, if you notified me of the decision of the Federal Republic of Germany. ...

With assurances of my high consideration,

(Signed): Erich Honecker